

The Causes of Republican Defeat

While individuals will differ as to the relative influence exerted by different causes, there will be general agreement as to several of the reasons which led to the Democratic landslide this year.

First: The farmers revolted against Republican policies.

Second: The laboring men resented the attitude of the administration on the coal and railroad strikes.

Third: The people with small incomes were indignant at the favoritism shown to profiteers in the repeal of the excess profits tax and to the financiers with big incomes as shown in the reduction of high rates.

Fourth: The consumers were angered by the burden placed upon them by a high tariff made in the interest of a few manufacturers.

Fifth: The ex-service men were indignant because of the refusal of the Republican party to vote a bonus when it was willing to vote money to profiteers, to those enjoying big incomes, to the railroads, and to the ship companies desiring subsidies.

These were causes that contributed materially to the stunning blow administered to the Republican leadership. To the national causes were added many local causes, chief among which was an increase in local taxation. In some states, like Nebraska, state, county and municipal taxes had tripled within the last few years.

When one examines the various influences that combined to produce the result, he finds that one phrase describes that situation now; it was a revolt against the rule of the rich. The government has been in the hands of big business and greed which lacked the intelligence that would lead to self-restraint and pushed its exactions so far as to excite a rebellion among enough Republicans to menace the supremacy of the party. It remains to be seen whether the rebuke will bring reform or simply stir the beneficiaries of privilege to greater activity in the hope of "getting while the getting is good."

The election of 1922 was a wonderful vindication of the wisdom of popular government. A nation that went riotously Republican in 1920 sobered up within two years. The story of the Prodigal Son has found its counterpart in the nation. Many who went away arrogantly two years ago came to themselves when they were confronted by a diet of husks. The repentance was sudden—may it prove complete.

W. J. BRYAN.

HANDICAPPED BY MILITARISM

The United States was handicapped in the first Hague Peace conference by the dominating influence of militarists. The American Commission was made up of Hon. Andrew D. White, Captain Mahan, U. S. Navy, and Captain Crozier, U. S. Army. It seems from the report of that conference that Captain Mahan did all the discussing; at least, no other name appears. The votes were taken by countries and the official record did not show the attitude of individual members of the commission.

From the autobiography of Mr. White, published in 1914, it seems that the action on poisonous gas was not unanimous, but the representatives of the army and navy outvoted Mr. White. The following extract from his autobiography throws interesting light upon the proceedings:

"As to asphyxiating bombs, Captain Mahan spoke at length against the provision to forbid them; his ground being that not the slightest thing had yet been done looking to such an invention; that, even if there had been, their use would not be so bad as the use of torpedoes against ships of war; that asphyxiating men by means of deleterious gases was not worse than asphyxiating them with water; indeed, that the former was the less dangerous of the two, since the gases used might simply incapacitate men for a short time, while the blowing up of a ship of war means death to all or nearly all of those upon it.

"To this it was answered—and, as it seemed to me, with force—that asphyxiating bombs might be used against towns for the destruction

of vast numbers of non-combatants, including women and children, while torpedoes at sea are used only against the military and naval forces of the enemy. The original proposal was carried by a unanimous vote, save ours. I am not satisfied with our attitude on this question; but what can a layman do when he has against him the foremost contemporary military and naval experts? My hope is that the United States will yet stand with the majority on the record.

"I stated afterward in a bantering way to Captain Mahan, as well as to others, that while I could not support any of the arguments that had been made in favor of allowing asphyxiating bombs, there was one which somewhat appealed to me—namely, that the dread of them might do something to prevent the rush of the rural population to the cities, and the aggregation of the poorer classes in them, which is one of the most threatening things to modern society, and also a second argument that such bombs would bring home to warlike stay-at-home orators and writers the realities of war."

The first step toward universal peace would seem to be the sending of advocates of peace to the peace conferences. The professional soldier, whether found in the army or navy, is quite apt to take a very different view of peace suggestions from that taken by the civilian. It is an honest difference of opinion expressed by the old saying that each one is inclined to magnify his own calling. If the United States is to lead in the peace movement it must speak through those who are hoping for the coming of the day when swords shall be beaten into plowshares.

W. J. BRYAN.

SOLDIERS OF PEACE

The American Legion at its recent meeting took a strong stand in favor of universal peace. It was not merely an expression of a DESIRE for peace but specifically endorsed the steps that lead to peace. Its plan is to "proceed as rapidly as conditions permit and the decrees of such international courts become operative; entirely to disarm and disband sea and air forces and to destroy the implements of warfare." This is a very sweeping proposition—a very important program. It is not to be partial disarmament but ENTIRE disarmament. The forces are not to be merely diminished but DISBANDED and the plan embodies the forces on sea and in the air. That there may be no doubt as to the completeness of the program, the Legion advises the destroying of "the implements of warfare."

Bravo—it means something when the men who fought in the late war become soldiers of peace and cast their influence against war as an institution. But their wisdom is further manifested in a declaration against the chief cause of war and in favor of a substitute for war. They oppose territorial aggrandizement. Experience shows that land hunger has been a fruitful source of international conflict. People who would regard robbery on the highway as a crime sometimes regard as patriotic the larger robbery that is accomplished by armies and navies. The Legion also declares in favor of international courts to "outlaw war." War cannot be abolished until a substitute is found and the international court is the natural substitute for violence, just as national courts have taken the place of violence between individuals.

While the Legion resolution did not mention INVESTIGATION as a method of preventing war, it doubtless would endorse the treaties providing for investigation of all disputes because they carry the nation a long way in the direction of peace.

In commending the action taken by the Legion, the personality of Commander Owsley should not be overlooked. His selection raises a strong presumption in his favor and this presumption is supported by his utterances. He has justified the confidence expressed by his friends and manifested by the Legion. He occupies a position of very great importance and will exert a large influence. It is extremely fortunate for the country that the official head of so large and so meritorious a group of American citizens should throw his influence upon the right side of so vital a question. Every friend of peace will rejoice that the Legion, under Commander Owsley's leadership, is using its powerful influence against war. The cause of peace is greatly strengthened by the arrival of General Owsley and his division; the issue of the battle is no longer in doubt.

W. J. BRYAN.

Clemenceau's Visit

The United States always welcomes distinguished men from abroad, whether their specialty be music, science, discovery, or politics. Clemenceau is one of the great men of France, even though he was dropped as a pilot soon after the war closed.

But giving a cordial personal welcome to distinguished men is very different from endorsing their views, and our distinguished French visitor will soon learn that the United States has not the slightest intention of entering into any "entangling alliance" either with France or any other nation. Clemenceau has never shown any great interest in the League of Nations; he has been skeptical in regard to its usefulness. He contended for an alliance between Great Britain, France, and the United States, believing that the three nations could, by acting together, insure world peace. Of course he overestimated the armed strength of the three nations and he entirely misunderstood the spirit of the United States. The proposed alliance between the United States and France which the president brought back from the conference has never received any consideration in this country, because there has never been any sentiment favorable to it. If there had been any such sentiment at that time it would have been destroyed by France's conduct since the war. Her imperialistic tendencies are now well known and our nation fully realizes that such an alliance as Clemenceau proposes would be hurtful to France as well as objectionable to the United States. Just as a revolver in the hip pocket leads men into altercations which they would otherwise avoid, so France, with the United States as a guarantor, would be apt to enter into disputes which she will avoid if compelled to reply upon her own strength.

The old idea that peace could be preserved by terrorism is exploded and the world now knows that peace is impossible without disarmament. If the nations are to live together as friends, they will have to lay aside their arms and they must exist as friends if they are to exist at all.

The people will be interested in hearing what Clemenceau has to say but they will not be interested in doing what he wants done. His visit will not strengthen the cause which he has espoused, but if he has is open to suggestion he will carry back to his native country a warning that may be of value in preserving the peace of the world. If France wants to exercise colonial power over helpless people, she will have to do it by her own strength or find some other partner besides the United States. We do not covet the riches that can be extorted from the so-called inferior people. We have promised independence to the Filipinos and we will not help to take liberty from any other people. We can reply to Clemenceau by paraphrase of a battle-cry that has come down to us from Revolutionary days: Millions for the propagation of peace but not a cent for the exploitation of weaker nations.

W. J. BRYAN.

PROHIBITION CONFERENCE NEEDED

The President has acted wisely in suggesting a conference of governors to consider the enforcement of prohibition. It will not only hasten effective co-operation, but it will give the country a chance to see how executives are under the domination of the wets. Possibly the governors might pass a resolution asking the President to safeguard the nation against the action of friendly nations that allow their flags to protect smuggling conspiracies against the laws of the United States.

THE NEXT GREAT REFORMS

The sentiment in favor of the direct election of president and vice-president, and for the inauguration of president and the convening of congress in January following elections, grows rapidly. A favorable committee report for a constitutional amendment embodying these reforms has already been secured in the Senate, and should receive the support of all those who favor the people's rule in governmental affairs.

A DESERVED COMPLIMENT

The election of Hon. Cordell Hull, as congressman from his old Tennessee district, is a deserved compliment to him and a recognition of his former services to the people of his district and state. Congressman Hull has done splendid work as chairman of the Democratic national committee, and his return to congress is fortunate for the country.